

## Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 VO-03 SCA-01 FBIE-00

INSE-00 /075 W

-----103022 060129Z /61

R 050320Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8374

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY GENEVA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC HONOLULU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 5120

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

FOR D/HA AND D/HA/ORN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, SHUM, MY

SUBJECT: OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS FROM RECENT TRIP TO REFUGEE  
CAMPS

REF: (A) KUALA LUMPUR 4980 (NOTAL); (B) STATE 178333 (NOTAL)

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1. ON A RECENT (28 JULY-1 AUGUST) TRIP TO THREE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE  
CAMPS ON THE EAST COAST OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA, EMBOFF OBTAINED THE  
FOLLOWING IMPRESSIONS;

(A) AN ABOUT-FACE IN THE ATTITUDE OF MALAYSIAN AUTHORITIES  
TOWARDS VIETNAMESE REFUGEES SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITHIN THE PAST  
FEW WEEKS. LOCAL OFFICIALS ARE DISTINCTLY MORE HOSPITABLE OF LATE,  
EVEN TO THE POINT OF GRANTING IMMEDIATE PERMISSION TO DISEMBARK TO

THREE BOATLOADS OF REFUGEES WHO ARRIVED O/A JULY 27. THIS IN MARKED CONTRAST TO EARLIER EFFORTS TO DISCOURAGE LANDING BY TOWING CRAFTS TO OPEN SEA AND, IN ONE CASE REPORTED BY REFUGEES IN JOHOR, FIRING SHOTS IN THE AIR AT THE SIGHT OF THE APPROACHING VESSEL IN AN EFFORT TO DETER IT FROM LANDING. THIS CHANGE OF HEART MAY RESULT FROM OUR RECENT

HIGH-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS OF THE SUBJECT BOTH HERE AND IN WASHINGTON, COUPLED WITH INDICATIONS REGARDING OUR INTENT TO ACCEPT 15,000 ADDITIONAL REFUGEES AS WELL AS CONTINUING EFFORTS BY UNHCR OFFICE HERE TO HIGHLIGHT OTHER COUNTRIES' INTEREST IN ACCEPTING REFUGEES FOR RESETTLE-

MENT (E.G., UNHRC REP SAMPATKUMAR TOLD NEWSMEN JULY 28 THAT SEVERAL WESTERN COUNTRIES HAVE "STRONGLY INDICATED" THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT

A "SIZEABLE NUMBER" OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM MALAYSIA FOR RESETTLE-

MENT.) WE ARE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE UNDER

THE IMPRESSION THAT A NEW U.S. REFUGEE PROGRAM FOR 15,000 REFUGEES WHEN

OPERATIONAL, WILL IMMEDIATELY RESOLVE MALAYSIA'S REFUGEE PROBLEMS. WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO CLARIFY THE SITUATION WITH THESE OFFICIALS, NOTING OUR UNCERTAINTY RE DETAILS SUCH AS TIMING AND NUMBERS AVAILABLE UNDER THIS PROGRAM FOR REFUGEES IN MALAYSIA. (COMMENT: WE ARE NATURALLY HEARTENED BY THE MORE HUMANE MALAYSIAN ATTITUDE NOW IN EVIDENCE, AND HOPE OUR NEW PROGRAM CAN BE IMPLEMENTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO  
SUSTAIN MALAYSIAN WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW REFUGEES TEMPORARY ASYLUM.)

(B) A SECOND OBSERVATION REGARDS REASONS REFUGEES ARE FLEEING VIETNAM. A NEWLY-ARRIVED GROUP CLAIMS SRV AUTHORITIES ARE NOW DEMANDING THE REGISTRATION OF ALL REPEAT ALL VIETNAMESE WHO WORKED FOR AMERICANS IN ANY CAPACITY, CIVILIAN OR MILITARY. IF THIS DEVELOPMENT HAS IN FACT COME ABOUT, IT MAY STIMULATE FURTHER OUTFLOW OF REFUGEES AND MAY REQUIRE BROADENING INS CRITERIA FOR CONDITIONAL ENTRY (I.E., TO CONSIDER EXPANDING CAT II TO COVER THOSE WHO WORKED FOR NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS AS WELL AS FOR USG AGENCIES). REASONS CITED BY RECENTLY-ARRIVED GROUPS FOR LEAVING VIETNAM SEEM TO BE LARGELY ECONOMIC. MANY STATE THAT THEY ARE NOW UNABLE TO MAKE A LIVING, AND SOME FEARED THEY WOULD BE SENT TO A NEW ECONOMIC ZONE. AMONG RECENT ARRIVALS, BETWEEN 50PCT-80PCT ARE ETHNIC CHINESE, MANY OF WHOM WERE INVOLVED IN BUSINESS. OTHERS CLAIM THAT BECAUSE OF THEIR WEALTHY BACKGROUNDS THEY ARE CONSIDERED BY THE AUTHORITIES AS "CLASS ENEMIES."

2. MEANWHILE, THE REFUGEE EXODUS CONTINUES; WITHIN THE PAST TWO WEEKS, SEVEN BOATS HAVE LANDED ON THE NORTHERN EAST COAST OF PENINSULA MALAYSIA, WITH A TOTAL OF 226 REFUGEES ABOARD. ALL HAVE

DISEMBARKED AT KUANTAN AND PULAU BESAR. PULAU BESAR ALONE, WHICH  
HOUSED APPROXIMATELY 120 REFUGEES IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR, NOW HAS  
OVER 1,000. COUNTRY-WIDE ESTIMATES ARE AT 3,000. HOWEVER, WE EXPECT A  
DROP-OFF IN THE ARRIVAL RATE IN LATE OCTOBER WITH THE COMMENCEMENT  
OF THE WINTER MONSOON.

MILLER

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## Message Attributes

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